



Kentucky Derby Update

Wednesday, May 4, 2022

CROWN PRIDE STREAKS BULLET HALF-MILE; TAIBA BLOWS OUT THREE-EIGHTHS

LOUISVILLE, KY (Wednesday, May 4, 2022) – Teruya Yoshida's **Crown Pride** (JPN), with Derby rider **Christophe Lemaire** aboard, blazed through a half-mile breeze in :46.60 over a fast track Wednesday morning under overcast skies.

Working on his own, Crown Pride produced fractions of :12.40, :24.20, :35.60 and galloped out five furlongs in 1:00. The move was the fastest of nine at the distance for the morning.

Working shortly after Crown Pride was **Zedan Racing Stables**' Santa Anita Derby (GI) winner **Taiba** who blew out three furlongs in :38.40 and galloped out a half-mile in :52.60.

BARBER ROAD – William Simon's **Barber Road**, most recently second in the Arkansas Derby (GI), changed his training schedule slightly Wednesday, going out to gallop at 6:30 a.m. with regular rider **Alexander Aguilar** aboard rather than waiting until the 7:30 a.m. training time set aside of Derby and Oaks horses.

"He likes to go out early," Simon said. "He gets keyed up and wants to get out there, then he comes back and takes his usual nap."

Barber Road is named for the road in rural North Carolina where Simon's wife, **Tammy**, grew up and that is named after her grandfather, **Clarence**. The horse is their first Kentucky Derby starter.

"This is an incredible honor," Simon said. "It's a blessing. You can't make up a story like this. He's a \$15,000 weanling purchase that decided he wanted to be a champion."

CHARGE IT, MO DONEGAL, PIONEER OF MEDINA – The Todd Pletcher Derby trio of **Charge It** (handled by **Hector Ramos**), **Mo Donegal** (**Amelia Green**) and **Pioneer of Medina** (**Humberto Zamora**) once again took advantage of the special 7:30-7:45 training period at Churchill Downs to stretch their legs and do some schooling four days out from their dates in the Kentucky Derby.

With the Hall of Fame conditioner looking on from trackside, the threesome went through solid gallops of a bit more than a mile and a quarter, then headed up the mile chute for a session with the starting gate.

"They were all good at the gate," Pletcher said. "They went right in."

On Saturday their gate positions will be No. 8 for Charge It, No. 1 for Mo Donegal and No. 11 for Pioneer of Medina.

The trainer has scheduled a further bit of educational time for the colts this afternoon with paddock schooling with the horses in today's sixth race.

CLASSIC CAUSEWAY – Kentucky West Racing and Clarke Cooper's **Classic Causeway** galloped 1 ½ miles Wednesday at 7:30 a.m.

"So many people have just been focused on his last race in the Florida Derby but if you draw a line through it, he belongs with a lot of others in this field," trainer **Brian Lynch** said.

Julien Leparoux rides the speedy Classic Causeway in the Kentucky Derby.

"I don't think he necessarily needs to be on the lead," Lynch said. "He's fast but he's able to track just off horses."

CROWN PRIDE (JPN) – Teruya Yoshida's UAE Derby (GII) winner **Crown Pride** (JPN) started his morning jogging in the mile chute under **Masa Matsuda** during the first harrow break of the morning.

Once the tractors left the track, jockey **Christophe Lemaire** jumped aboard to guide Crown Pride through a half-mile work that was timed in :46.60.

Working on his own, Crown Pride produced fractions of :12.40, :24.20, :35.60 and galloped out five furlongs in 1:00. The move was the fastest of nine at the distance for the morning.

Following the breeze, Lemaire took Crown Pride back to the mile chute where Matsuda again took the reins for the leisurely trip back to the Quarantine Barn.

"I have worked him before in Japan and I very happy with his work today and with the way he changed leads. He did it very well," said Lemaire, who is back at Churchill Downs for the first time since he rode in the 2010 and 2011 Breeders' Cups.

Lemaire said he has watched video of recent runnings of the Kentucky Derby and the huge fields that accompany the race.

"The start is very important and then it is all about the fractions," Lemaire said. "You ride him to where he is comfortable and then see what happens."

Trainer **Koichi Shintani** was all smiles after the work by Crown Pride who is scheduled to have a walk day Thursday.

CYBERKNIFE, TAWNY PORT, ZOZOS – Trainer **Brad Cox** sent all three of his Kentucky Derby hopefults to the track during the special 7:30 a.m. training period and all three galloped 1 ½ miles with their regular exercise riders and visited the starting gate. Arkansas Derby (GI) winner **Cyberknife** was ridden by **Katie Talbot**, Lexington Stakes (GIII) winner **Tawny Point** had **Edvin Vargas** aboard and Louisiana Derby (GII) runner-up **Zozos** was ridden by **Kelvin Perez**.

"I'm happy with all three of them," Cox said. "They're doing good."

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EPICENTER – Coming out to the track later than usual Wednesday, **Winchell Thoroughbreds' Epicenter** jogged down the backstretch and walked back during the 7:30 a.m. Derby and Oaks training time.

Jockey **Joel Rosario** made a visit to the Asmussen barn afterward to see his Derby mount. On board for all Epicenter's 3-year-old races, the 2021 Eclipse Award-winning jockey has consistently been Asmussen's go-to jockey for most of 2022.

"It seems like [Epicenter] has no problem with anything," Rosario said. "He has won on the lead, he has won coming from behind horses, so we'll see how he handles it. He has matured it seems. In the beginning I had to ride him a little more. But now he's running and grabs the bridle a bit more, it's what you want to see."

Asked about their strategy breaking from post three, Rosario joked: "Maybe we'll just keep it a secret. We'll get a good break and see what the horse wants to do. He always breaks well out of the gate, so we'll see how he does on Saturday."

ETHEREAL ROAD – **Aaron Sones** and **Julie Gilbert's Ethereal Road** galloped 1 1/2 miles during the special 7:30 a.m. training time Wednesday.

Ethereal Road was the last horse to make the Kentucky Derby field, not becoming an official starter until late Monday morning, but Hall of Fame trainer **D. Wayne Lukas**, who already has four Derby trophies, had been making a case for several weeks why the **Quality Road** colt deserved a shot in the 20-horse field.

"I think he has chance to get a piece of it because of his style," Lukas said. "He's one of the few horses in the 20 that has that style of making a half-mile run. Some of them can't even make a quarter-mile run. I've learned in all my years of being in this, that if you can make a sustained long run, you have a chance to get a piece of it."

HAPPY JACK – The **Oxbow** colt **Happy Jack** followed his usual Derby pattern Wednesday morning at Churchill during the 7:30-7:45 special training period for Derby and Oaks runners.

Exercise rider **Tony Romero** galloped the well-made bay through a mile and a half in good fashion, then headed back to Barn 41.

Trainer **Doug O'Neill** watched the proceedings from the grandstand, but his longtime right-hand-man, **Leandro Mora**, oversaw the backside business and stated all was well.

"Jack" is happy," Mora said. "And when 'Jack" is happy, we're all happy."

Rafael Bejarano has the call Saturday on Happy Jack for the 148th running of the Kentucky Derby.

MESSIER, TAIBA – Trainer **Tim Yakteen** had his two Derby colts – the **Empire Maker** bay **Messier** and the **Gun Runner** chestnut **Taiba** – on the track for the special Derby/Oaks training period from 7:30-7:45 a.m. Wednesday at Churchill Downs.

Messier, with exercise rider **Beto Gomez** up, went about his usual business and galloped a mile and a half on a cool, overcast Louisville morning.

But with Taiba, the Santa Anita Derby (GI) winner, the conditioner put a wrinkle into the proceedings and pulled out a stratagem from days gone by that he first saw when he worked on the shedrow of one of the game's greats, **Charlie Whittingham**.

Yakteen deputized crack rider **Joel Rosario** – an old friend from the jockey's days in California – to take a leg up on his colt for his morning exercises. He also put a pair of blinkers on his lightly raced ace ("The blinkers were just something to help him focus; he doesn't need them to race," the trainer noted.), then had the two backtrack to the seven-furlong pole before turning to gallop to the three-eighths where they broke off and went through a three-furlong breeze.

"I don't know how fast he went," Rosario said afterward at Barn 37. "But I do know he felt good."

Yakteen had spent a half dozen years in the early 1990s working and learning under Hall of Famer Whittingham, who made it SOP to give his stakes horses a short blowout in the days just ahead of a race.

"We blew him out three furlongs this morning," Yakteen said back at the barn. "Nothing special; I got him in :38 and two (the Churchill clockers did likewise). It was just what we wanted. I'm following the same pattern we used coming up to the Santa Anita Derby. He blew out there, too."

In the Santa Anita Derby – only the second start of the precocious colt's career – he came running late under Hall of Fame rider **Mike Smith** to beat stablemate Messier by 2 1/4 lengths.

RATTLE N ROLL, SMILE HAPPY, TIZ THE BOMB – Trainer **Kenny McPeek** had **Magdalena Racing's Tiz the Bomb** and **Lucky Seven Stable's Smile Happy** on the track Wednesday, for maintenance mile-and-a-half gallops. **Edwardo Ruvalcaba** was on Tiz the Bomb, while **Danny Ramsey** was aboard Smile Happy.

"All routine," McPeek said. "We backed up, schooled in the paddock, then stood in the gate at the end of the gallop."

Also out at the time reserved for Oaks and Derby horses for a gallop was also eligible **Rattle N Roll**, with **James Graham**, who will ride him Saturday if he makes the field.

Tiz the Bomb comes into the Derby off a win in the Grade III Jeff Ruby Steaks at Turfway Park, while Smile Happy had strong seconds in the Grade I Blue Grass at Keeneland to **Zandon**, and in the Grade II Risen Star to **Epicenter**.

"Smile Happy is doing super, so strong," McPeek said. "He wanted to go around again."

Smile Happy starts from the No. 5 post in the Derby with **Corey Lanerie**, while Tiz the Bomb, with **Brian Hernandez Jr.** aboard, drew the No. 9 post.

RICH STRIKE – RED TR-Racing's Rich Strike galloped a mile and a half under **Gabriel Lagunes** and is scheduled to school in the paddock this afternoon early in the 10-race program.

Trained by **Eric Reed**, Rich Strike is the first also-eligible for the Derby and would not one defection by Friday's 9 a.m. scratch time to make the field.

SIMPLIFICATION – Tami Bobo’s Simplification visited the starting gate and then galloped a mile and a half under **Ismal Ramirez** for trainer **Antonio Sano**.

For Sano, who has 72 horses stabled in South Florida, this is his second shot in the Kentucky Derby having seen his **Gunnevera** finish seventh behind Always Dreaming in the 2017 Run for the Roses.

“I am taking the same approach as I did with Gunnevera,” Sano said. “We got here about eight or nine days before the race and did all of the major work in Florida.”

There is one small difference this time. In 2017, Gunnevera was the only horse Sano brought to Louisville but accompanying Simplification on the van ride to Kentucky was the 3-year-old maiden **Logico** who is entered in the first race Saturday.

“He knows some of the Derby horses,” Sano’s son and assistant Alessandro said. “He has run against **Charge It** and **White Abarrio**.”

SUMMER IS TOMORROW – Michael Hilary Burke and Negar Burke’s Summer Is Tomorrow visited the starting gate and galloped a mile and a half under **Heinz Runge**. Summer Is Tomorrow is scheduled to school in the paddock this afternoon.

Runner-up in the UAE Derby (GII), Summer Is Tomorrow will be making his first start outside of Dubai in the Kentucky Derby. In his seven-race career, Summer Is Tomorrow has not raced on an off track, a surface he may face Saturday with rain in the forecast for the weekend.

“He has been on an off track and handled it well in training,” trainer **Bhupat Seemar** said.

WHITE ABARRO – C2 Racing Stable and La Milagrosa Stable’s White Abarro was again the standout on the track Wednesday morning — for his dazzling appearance. The son of Spendthrift Farm sire **Race Day**, with his brilliant gray coat, had the cameras clicking during the morning workouts. He’s one of three gray colts in the field of 20, but he trends more to gray than **Barber Road** or **Charge It**.

Trainer **Saffie Joseph Jr.** had the Grade I Florida Derby and Grade III Holy Bull winner out Wednesday with exercise rider **Vincente Gudiel** on a track drying out from a rainy Tuesday. In the 2020 Derby, Joseph made his first training appearance with **NY Traffic**, finishing eighth at 12-1.

“He’s doing well,” Joseph said of White Abarro. “He had a good gallop of a mile today and all is in order. He’s shown class from Day One. He won his debut, which made the owners buy him, and he’s been doing great all the way.”

ZANDON – Jeff Drown’s Blue Grass Stakes (GI) winner Zandon galloped 1 ½ miles Wednesday morning.

“He was so visually impressive in the Blue Grass and he’s continued to do very well since arriving at Churchill Downs,” trainer **Chad Brown** said.

THE KENTUCKY DERBY FIELD – Here’s the field from the rail out for the Grade I, \$3 million Kentucky Derby presented by Woodford Reserve (GI): **Mo Donegal** (Irad Ortiz Jr.); **Happy Jack** (Rafael Bejarano); **Epicenter** (Joel Rosario); **Summer Is Tomorrow** (Mickael Barzalona); **Smile Happy** (Corey Lanerie); **Messier** (John Velazquez); **Crown Pride** (JPN) (Christophe Lemaire); **Charge It** (Luis Saez); **Tiz the Bomb** (Brian Hernandez Jr.); **Zandon** (Flavien Prat); **Pioneer of Medina** (Joe Bravo); **Taiba** (Mike Smith); **Simplification** (Jose Ortiz); **Barber Road** (Rey Gutierrez); **White Abarro** (Tyler Gaffalione); **Cyberknife** (Florent Geroux); **Classic Causeway** (Julien Leparoux); **Tawny Port** (Ricardo Santana Jr.); **Zozos** (Manny Franco); **Ethereal Road** (Luis Contreras). Also Eligibles: **Rich Strike** (Sonny Leon); **Rattle N Roll** (James Graham).

LONGINES KENTUCKY OAKS UPDATE

BEGUINE – Charles Matses’ Beguine stood in the starting gate and then galloped a mile and a half under **Raul Vizcarrando** for trainer **Danny Peitz**.

Beguine is the lone also-eligible for Friday’s Oaks and would need one defection from the field by scratch time to make the race.

CANDY RAID – Don’t Tell My Wife Stables and trainer **Keith Desormeaux**’s Candy Raid spent some time schooling in the gate Wednesday morning. After, she jogged during the scheduled 7:30 a.m. Derby and Oaks hopefuls work time. Exercise rider Alex Cano said she will walk Thursday, and then on Friday she will gallop before her Oaks assignment that afternoon.

Made 30-1 by morning line oddsmaker **Mike Battaglia**, Candy Raid’s best effort came winning on Turfway Park’s Tapeta track in April’s Bourbonette.

“I sure would like to have a filly doing as well as her that was in a field where she is a 5-1 (shot),” Desormeaux said. “Handicappers will see her best race came on (Turfway’s all-weather surface) and probably doubt she will handle the dirt track here the same. But horses keep changing throughout their career, especially 3-year-olds, so all I know is she is moving great over the track, she is happy, she is confident, she’s doing great.”

COCKTAIL MOMENTS – Trainer **Kenny McPeek** had Dixiana Farms’ Cocktail Moments on the track, going a mile and a half with exercise rider **Albert Kelly**, alongside his Derby colts **Smile Happy** and **Tiz the Bomb**.

The Kentucky-bred filly was a \$190,000 purchase at the Keeneland September yearling sale. McPeek has named Corey Lanerie as her rider in the Longines Kentucky Oaks, in which she drew the No. 11 post.

DESERT DAWN – The California filly Desert Dawn went to the racetrack for the special 7:30-7:45 training period for Derby and Oaks horses. Trainer **Phil D’Amato** had exercise rider **Roman Cecher** take Desert Dawn through the five-furlong gap and on her way to a mile and a half gallop as she moves even closer to her date in Friday’s \$1.25 million Longines Kentucky Oaks (GI).

D'Amato brought two fillies in for racing this weekend (**Ain't Easy** will go in the Eight Belles, also on Friday) and – with a current weather report that is saying Friday could be a very wet and soggy day at the racetrack – he was asked how he thought his duo might fare on what likely will be some degree of an 'off' track.

"We don't get to train and race much on 'off' tracks in California," he said. "Both my fillies have off-track pedigrees, but you really don't know how that works until you see it (happen). I guess there's a chance we'll find out Friday."

Umberto Rispoli will be aboard Desert Dawn and they'll break from post nine in the 148th edition of the Oaks.

ECHO ZULU – On Wednesday **L and N Racing** and **Winchell Thoroughbreds' Echo Zulu** made an appearance at the scheduled 7:30 a.m. Derby and Oaks horses work time.

On Tuesday, she schooled in the paddock during the fourth race, exhibiting her class and confidence in the face of a crowd. Her jockey, **Joel Rosario**, stopped by to see her.

"She seems like she is doing really good," Rosario said. "I am excited to have the opportunity to ride her again."

GODDESS OF FIRE, NEST, SHAHAMA – The Kentucky Oaks trio working out of trainer **Todd Pletcher's** barn – **Goddess of Fire**, **Nest** and **Shahama** -- had a split session for their training exercises Wednesday morning with Shahama going solo to the track at 6:30 and the other two taking advantage of the special 7:30-7:45 Derby/Oaks-only training period.

Shahama (handled by her usual guy, exercise rider **Humberto Zamora**) went through a firm gallop in the middle of the big Churchill Downs oval covering a mile and one quarter, then returned to the outfit's Barn 35.

At 7:30, Zamora was up again, this time on Goddess of Fire, while stablemate Nest had the services of **Nora McCormack**. That tandem also galloped well in the middle of the track for a distance of approximately a mile and a quarter.

But the femmes weren't done yet. At 10 a.m. they headed over to the Churchill paddock and got a feel for their saddling grounds come Friday in the rich Kentucky Oaks.

On that afternoon, Goddess of Fire will be partnered with Hall of Fame rider **John Velazquez**; race morning line favorite Nest will have the saddle services of three-time Eclipse Award winning jockey **Irad Ortiz Jr.**, and the undefeated Shahama will be handled for the first time by rising star **Flavien Prat**.

HIDDEN CONNECTION – **Hidden Brook Farm** and **Black Type Thoroughbreds'** TwinSpires.com Fair Grounds Oaks (GII) runner-up **Hidden Connection** galloped about 1 ½ miles around 5:45 a.m. Wednesday.

"I think she'll be able to work out a trip into that first turn," trainer **Bret Calhoun** said.

KATHLEEN O. – The crowd that poured into the backside for the 7:30 a.m. Derby and Oaks training session got a treat when **Winngate Stables' Kathleen O.** made her appearance. Consistently jogging in the mornings at 6 o'clock, the undefeated filly added an extra activity on Wednesday.

"I schooled her in the gate, so that's why we went out at a different time today," trainer **Shug McGaughey** said. Gate schooling begins at 7:30.

Following the on-track activity, Kathleen O. had a leisurely stroll through the stable area circling behind the barns close to the track kitchen and working her way back to Barn 43, a regimen McGaughey typically does with his horses.

McGaughey plans to gallop Kathleen O. on Thursday and walk her on race day.

NOSTALGIC – **Godolphin's Nostalgic** galloped 1 ½ miles at 7:30 a.m. under **Penny Gardiner**.

"In her first few races she was so far back," trainer **Bill Mott** said. "In the Gazelle, she put **Jose (Ortiz)** into the race earlier. She was able to hold her position in the race. She had a really good winter to mature at Payson and she's showing that leading into the Oaks."

Ortiz has the ride in Friday's Oaks.

SECRET OATH – **Briland Farm's** multiple stakes winner **Secret Oath** and exercise rider **Danielle Rosier** were, as usual, among the first horses on the track when it opened at 5:15 a.m. on Wednesday.

The Arrogate filly is a homebred for Briland Farm, a 90-acre nursery located in Lexington, Kentucky, owned and operated by **Robert** and **Stacy Mitchell**. They bought the farm in 2000 and started their breeding operation with a mare they bought for \$1 as a companion for their riding horse.

Secret Oath is a daughter of the Mitchell's multiple stakes winner, **Absinthe Minded**. When asked if there were any similarities between mother and daughter, Stacy Mitchell replied, "Absinthe Minded has always been the alpha mare, the boss mare. When Secret Oath was on the farm, she was the same way. She was like 'I'm the leader, follow me.'"

Secret Oath is the first Oaks starter for the Mitchells.

"This has been a trip beyond our imagination," Stacy Mitchell said. "It's exciting. It's an honor just to be in the race. This is an exceptional year. I think it's one of the toughest Oaks I've seen in 20 years."

TURNERLOOSE – **Ike and Dawn Thrash's Turnerloose** galloped 1 ½ miles at 6:45 Wednesday morning with regular rider **Edvin Vargas** aboard for trainer **Brad Cox**.

VENTI VALENTINE – **NY Final Furlong Racing Stable** and **Parkland Thoroughbreds'** Gazelle (GIII) runner-up **Venti Valentine** took to the track Wednesday with exercise rider **Luis Peña**, galloping a mile and a quarter during the time reserved for Oaks and Derby horses, trainer **Jorge Abreu** said.

"She's pretty happy here," Abreu said. "Today we'll take her over to the paddock for schooling. I don't think the crowds will bother her, she's got a good mind."

The New York-bred has three wins and two seconds from her five starts since late September. She had a final workout for the Longines Kentucky Oaks last Friday with **Tyler Gaffalione** aboard, going five furlongs in 1:00.80. Gaffalione will ride her in the Oaks, starting from the No. 7 post.

YUUGIRI – Sekie and Tsunebumi Yoshihara’s Fantasy Stakes (GIII) winner **Yuugiri** went to the track at 7:30 a.m. with trainer **Rodolphe Brisset** aboard. She schooled in the paddock during the first race.

“She’s going really well,” Brisset said. “She’s been really good all week. I’m not sure how she’ll do at 1 1/8 miles, but there’s not a lot of speed in there other than **Echo Zulu**. I like our post position (six). We’ll see how things unfold from there.”

THE LONGINES KENTUCKY OAKS FIELD – Here’s the field from the rail out for the Grade I, \$1.25 million Longines Kentucky Oaks (GI): **Secret Oath** (Luis Saez); **Nostalgic** (Jose Ortiz); **Hidden Connection** (Rey Gutierrez); **Nest** (Irad Ortiz Jr.); **Goddess of Fire** (John Velazquez); **Yuugiri** (Florent Geroux); **Echo Zulu** (Joel Rosario); **Venti Valentine** (Tyler Gaffalione); **Desert Dawn** (Umberto Rispoli); **Kathleen O.** (Javier Castellano); **Cocktail Moments** (Corey Lanerie); **Candy Raid** (Rafael Bejarano); **Shahama** (Flavien Prat); **Turnerloose** (Manny Franco). Also Eligible: **Beguine** (Ricardo Santana Jr.).

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